



# MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

## ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW OF FISH INTRODUCTION

### Description of water body:

**Name:** Douchette Reservoir

**County:** Phillips

**Legal description:** T31N, R28E, S26

### Name of the drainage where the pond would be located:

The pond is located on an unnamed, ephemeral drainage of Exeter Creek.

### Fish species proposed for introduction:

Bluegill

### Is this species legally present in the drainage?

Bluegill are not considered native to the drainage but have been legally introduced to the drainage. FWP stocking records indicate bluegill were stocked into Douchette Reservoir in 1944. This was a one-time stocking event.

### Species of Special Concern present in the drainage and associated risks:

Iowa Darter, Sauger and Northern Redbelly Dace are a known species of special concern present downstream of Exeter Creek, with their presence limited to the Milk River. Associated risks to species of special concern are considered minimal. The proposed species is present throughout the middle and lower Milk River drainage and the proposed introduction would not result in cumulative impacts.

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### RISKS:

#### Potential for impacts on genetic structure of existing fish populations:

☒ None ☐ Minor ☐ Major

Comments: The potential genetic impacts to downstream fish populations of the listed species is considered negligible. Populations of the listed species may be present downstream in the Milk River are of introduced origin with no conservation concern for their genetic structure.

**Impacts to any life stage of existing fish populations due to competition and/or predation?**

\_\_\_\_\_ None   X   Minor \_\_\_\_\_ Major

Comments: The proposed species may compete with largemouth bass for similar food sources (zooplankton) during early life-stages.

**Impacts to other forms of aquatic life that may be caused by this introduction?**

\_\_\_\_\_ None   X   Minor \_\_\_\_\_ Major

Comments: Aquatic invertebrates would be consumed if present, but no population level impact is expected.

**Potential for the proposed new species to reproduce in this location:**

\_\_\_\_\_ None \_\_\_\_\_ Minor   X   Major

Comments: It would be anticipated that bluegill could successfully reproduce at the proposed location.

**If necessary, would it be feasible to remove this species after it has been stocked?**

Yes, the proposed species could be removed via netting or chemical treatment.

**Would this introduction result in impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable?**

No.

**Describe reasonable and prudent alternatives to this action, if any (including no action).**

Alternative 1 – No Action: The No Action alternative would result in not stocking the proposed species and not providing additional recreational angling opportunity in Northcentral Montana.

**Describe and evaluate mitigation, stipulations, or other control measures enforceable by the agency, if any:**

The reservoir and the proposed species would be managed according to the general Eastern Fishing District regulations.

**List any other agencies or individuals that may be affected by the proposed introduction:**

The proposed waterbody and access to the waterbody occur on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands. BLM personnel have been consulted regarding the proposed action and have expressed support for developing recreational fisheries at the proposed location.

**List all agencies and individuals who have been notified of this proposed introduction:**

BLM- Malta Field Office

**Based on this evaluation, is an EIS required? YES/NO? If no, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for the proposed action.**

No EIS required. Action is expected to be minor.

**Describe the level of public involvement and, given the complexity of the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate?**

To date, there has been no public involvement. To ensure adequate public involvement opportunity, this draft EA will be posted on the FWP website and copies will be made available at the FWP Havre Area Resource Office. Given the simple nature and minor impacts of the proposed action, the level of public involvement is deemed appropriate.

**Comments will be accepted until:** April 30, 2019

**Comments may be submitted to:**

Mail: Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks  
Attn: Douchette Reservoir Bluegill Introduction  
2165 HWY 2 E  
Havre, MT 59501

Email: [cnagel@mt.gov](mailto:cnagel@mt.gov)

Online: <http://fwp.mt.gov/news/publicNotices/>

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**Date:** March 25, 2019